

B. Remarks

The claims are 1-90, with claims 1, 27, 46, 48, 74, and 90 being independent. Claims 27-90 have been withdrawn from consideration as being directed to non-elected subject matter. Reconsideration of the claims that are under examination is expressly requested.

Claims 1-6, 16, 18, and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly obvious from JPA 8-323872 (Kino) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,302,499 (Grisch). Claims 8-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly obvious from Kino in view of Grisch and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0143373 A1 (Bledsoe). Claims 11-15, 17, and 20-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly obvious from Kino in view of Grisch and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0023012 A1 (Kia). Lastly, claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly obvious from Kino in view of Grisch and U.S. Patent No. 4,261,330 (Reinisch). The grounds of rejection are respectfully traversed.

Prior to addressing the merits of the rejections, Applicants would like briefly to discuss some of the features and advantages of the presently claimed invention. That invention, in pertinent part, is related to a method for forming a seamless cladding panel. In this method, a coating layer is applied onto a mold surface to a first desired dry thickness. A first laminate layer that includes a resin and a fiber material is introduced onto the coating layer at a first desired thickness. A core material, which includes a plurality of fibers, is introduced onto the first laminate layer. A second laminate layer,

which also includes a resin and a fiber material, is introduced onto the core material at a second desired thickness.

Importantly, a light facing veil is introduced onto the second laminate layer. The light facing veil comprises a fibrous strand and a binder system, and a portion of the resin of the second laminate layer substantially wets out the fibrous strand. To complete the formation of the panel, the resins of the first and second laminate layers are cured. Since the light facing veil was applied onto the second laminate layer, the resulting panel has a smooth back surface for bonding and installation.

Kino is directed to an outermost layer of a reinforced plastic molding, such as a waterproof pan. This reference discloses combining a cured gel layer with a long fiber reinforced layer sandwiched between a short fiber reinforced layer and a short fiber backup layer. As the Examiner acknowledged, Kino does not disclose or suggest introducing a light facing veil as claimed onto the second laminate layer. Nonetheless, the Examiner alleged that Grisch discloses using the claimed veil and that it would have obvious to use such a veil in the process disclosed in Kino in the claimed manner. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Grisch is directed to the production of plastic articles, which have the properties of high flexural and impact strength, as well as good corrosion resistance. Applicants respectfully submit, however, that this reference, whether considered alone or together with Kino, does not disclose or suggest placing the fabric or veil onto the second laminate layer as claimed.

Grisch teaches using synthetic-fiber surfacing veils to protect SMC (sheet molding compound) parts from chemical and physical exposure. Specifically, Grisch

discloses placing the fabric or veil on one of the die elements, e.g., the female die, and then placing the SMC over the fabric to make up the total charge. The charge is then compression molded (col. 2, line 66, to col. 3, line 3).

In essence, Grisch teaches using the veil or fabric layer to protect the fibers in the SMC from corrosion and abrasion by placing this veil or fabric between the outer surface of the SMC and the fibers within the SMC. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that, at most, Grisch suggests incorporating a fabric or veil between the gel layer and the short fiber reinforced layer in Kino, i.e., between the outer surface and the fibers that Grisch teaches the veil should protect. The veil in Grisch provides a barrier against wear and tear, and it is clear that such a barrier would not be applied to the short fiber backup layer, i.e., the back layer, in Kino, which is not subjected to this wear and tear.

Bledsoe, Kia, and Reinisch cannot cure the deficiencies of Kino and Grisch. None of these documents discloses or suggests applying a light facing veil onto the second laminate layer as is presently claimed.

In sum, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references, whether considered separately or in any combination, do not disclose or suggest all of the presently claimed features. Thus, withdrawal of the outstanding rejections and expedient passage of the application to issue are respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

/Leonard P. Diana/

Leonard P. Diana
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 29,296

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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